

STREET SMART

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Meeting Summary of the SANBAG Board of Directors

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♦ HR 2095: Rail Safety Improvement Act

SANBAG Board adopted a position to support HR 2095, the Rail Safety Improvement Act, on the same day the bill was passed in the senate.

HR 2095 requires the secretary of transportation to develop a long-term strategy for improving rail safety, taking into consideration specific key issues described in the act. HR 2095 also establishes a \$50 million annual grant program for implementing the new safety requirements outlined within the act. SANBAG staff will work with state and federal legislators and assist Metrolink in obtaining funding for these improvements.

HR 2095 encompasses many rail safety bills into one and includes a mandate to implement a Positive Train Control System (PTC) on class 1 railroads, rail carriers with poor safety records, or rail carriers that provide intercity or commuter rail service by December 31, 2015. The PTC system is designed to prevent over-speed derailments and train-to-train collisions, such as the Metrolink accident that occurred on September 12, 2008.

HR 2095 requires the strategy to provide protection of workers, through defined working hours and adequate rest periods between shifts. The act also requires a safety study to look into the use of personal electronic devices used by employees and other issues that may harm health and safety.

Within HR 2095, railroads are required to set up a toll free number to report malfunctions and other issues at railroad crossings, such as gates, signals and other malfunctions. The Act also directs the National Transportation Safety Board to create a program which assists victims and their families who are involved in an accident, similar to a disaster plan used in the aviation field.

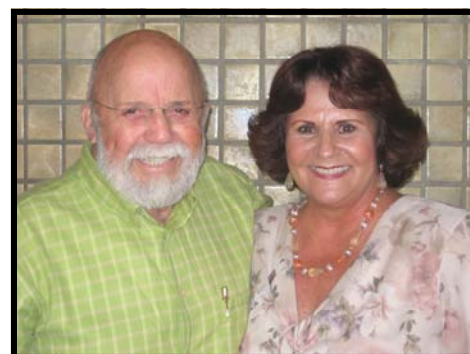
Another item listed within the act requires the Federal Railroad Administration to develop and encourage laws regarding obstructions near crossings that can prevent a clear view of pedestrians and vehicles, such as overgrown vegetation, and railroad equipment.

HR 2095 also increases the penalties for violating certain rail safety requirements, which range from \$500 to \$25,000, depending on the type of violation and occurrence of violations.

There was unanimous regional support from the Southern California region in support of HR 2095. The Act now awaits the President's signature. It is rumored that the President is in favor of this legislation.



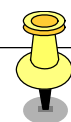
♦ Burris honored for 15 years of Service



Board members congratulated Secretary Daylene Burris for completing 15 years of service at SANBAG.

Board Vice President and chair of the Commuter Rail Committee, Mayor Paul Eaton, pictured at top with Burris, presented a lapel pin to commemorate her longevity with the agency.

Burris, secretary to the Director of Transit and Rail and to the Chief Financial Officer, brings many smiles and delight to the agency. SANBAG wishes her many more years of service.



Meeting Calendar

- **Oct. 8:** Administrative Committee, 9:00 a.m.
 - **Oct. 9:** Major Projects Committee, 9:00 a.m.
 - **Oct. 15:** Plans and Programs Com., 12:00 p.m.
 - **Oct. 17:** Mountain Desert Committee, 9:00 a.m.
 - **Oct. 22:** SCRRA Delegates Briefing, 8:30 a.m.
 - **Oct. 23:** Commuter Rail Com., 12:00 p.m.
 - **Nov. 5:** Board of Directors Mtg., 9:30 a.m.
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- **Oct. 16:** High Desert Opportunity, 7:30 a.m.
 - **Oct. 20:** Mobility 21 Annual Summit, 8 a.m.

What the CA Budget Means for Transportation...

While the California State Budget was debated for months and Wall Street is reeling from a crisis, SANBAG has continued to monitor both financial situations, assessing how either could potentially impact transportation projects and plans in San Bernardino County. SANBAG remains committed to adapt to financial variables in the economy, since transportation funding is derived from a combination of Federal, State and Local sources.

The 2008-09 State Budget, which Governor Schwarzenegger signed on September 23, provides \$17.3 billion for transportation projects throughout the State. The budget also includes the full funding of Proposition 42, the state sales tax on gasoline sales, which funds the State Transportation Improvement Program and provides matching funds for Proposition 1B, the Trade Corridor Improvement Fund, which invests in projects ready for construction by 2014.



Since funding from Proposition 1B is one-time and will be exhausted over the next few years, the Governor directed Caltrans to take all steps necessary to deliver Proposition 1B projects as

quickly as possible, while remaining within the funding level, which the Legislature has provided. An appropriate balance between state staff and contract staff should enable the state to improve highways, roads, bridges and railroad crossings immediately and ensure that adequate work progresses.

However, The State Highway Operations and Protection Program appropriation was reduced by \$100 million, from \$1.9 billion to \$1.8 billion, to bring the program in line with lower projected gas tax revenue. SANBAG is working cooperatively with Caltrans to ensure that funds are not removed from this program in the future.

The Governor also reduced the State's Transit Assistance (STA) appropriations by \$100 million, from \$406 million to \$306 million. This action was taken in order for sufficient funding to be available in the Public Transportation Account. Locally, reducing the STA funds may jeopardize the Redlands passenger rail project and the sbX Bus Rapid Transit project, among others.

SANBAG's Second Grade Separation Breaks Ground



The City of Montclair and SANBAG officially broke ground last month on the Ramona Avenue grade separation project in the City of Montclair.

Montclair Mayor Paul Eaton spoke about the need for this project, since rail traffic has been increasing on this stretch of busy rail line, known as the Alameda Corridor East. "Motorists will no longer have to wait for trains," said Mayor Eaton, as a train happened to pass behind him.

City of Upland Mayor and SANBAG Board Member John Pomierski spoke about the vast need for grade separation projects throughout the county. He noted that SANBAG has a list of nearly 20 grade separations. "These types of projects are a viable solution to keep people and trains moving," he said.

This particular project will build a four-lane bridge over the Union Pacific railroad tracks that cross at Ramona Avenue, between Mission Boulevard and Brooks Street. This will eliminate the lengthy waits for trains, improving safety and air quality.

The new bridge will provide two travel lanes and a left turn pocket in each direction, a striped median and a pedestrian sidewalk on both sides of the bridge. New streets also will be constructed and minor realignments of existing streets also will occur to help ease the traffic congestion in this area.

During the estimated 18 month construction project, the Ramona Avenue and State Street intersection will be fully closed to all motorists.

The project will cost about \$20 million, with funding provided by the state's Traffic Congestion Relief Program, federal funds and city funds. SANBAG will manage the construction contract, while working cooperatively with the city.